

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02

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FM AMEMBASSY COTONOU

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5158

INFO AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY LAGOS

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

S E C R E T COTONOU 0730

E. O. 11652: XGDS 2

TAGSGC PINS, DM

SUBJ: INTERNAL SITUATION: JUDGMENT ON ALLEGED

FEBRUARY 28 PLOT

ABIDJAN FOR USDAO

REF: PARIS 13625 (NOTAL)

1. ON MAY 9 PRESIDENT KEREKOU, MINISTERS, MEMBERS OF MILITARY
REVOLUTIONARY COUNCIL, AND REPRESENTATIVES OF ARMY, GENDARMERIE
AND POLICE MET SECRETLY FOR FOURTEEN HOURS AT PRESIDENCY
TO JUDGE INVESTIGATION OF ALLEGED FEBRUARY 28, 1973 PLOT. GROUP
SAT AS COURT MARTIAL UNDER DECREE PUBLISHED SAME DAY.
MEETING CONTINUED WITHOUT APPARENT AGREEMENT ON MAY 10.
WE ARE RELIABLY INFORMED BY SDECE REPRESENTATIVE THAT
FOLLOWING GUINEAN ADVICE THAT FOR A REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT
TO SUCCEED IT HAD TO KILL A FEW PEOPLE, INTERIOR MINISTER
AIKPE AND FINANCE MINISTER ASSOGBA OPTED FOR EXECUTION
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OF COLONEL ALLEY, COMMANDANT HACHEME AND COMMANDANT CHABI. THIS WAS OPPOSED BY LARGE MAJORITY OF THOSE PRESENT. MEETING THEN TURNED TO LENGTH OF PRISON SENTENCES -- TWENTY YEARS FOR ALLEY, HACHEME AND CHABI, AND SHORTER SENTENCES FOR OTHERS. AT THIS POINT, KEREKOU, WHO WOULD LIKE TO SEE HIS NORTHERN ALLY, LT COLONEL MAURICE KOUANDETE, BACK IN THE FOLD, INSISTED THAT DECISION ALSO BE TAKEN TO REINTEGRATE INTO ARMY THOSE OFFICERS WHO WERE ABSOLVED OF COMPLICITY IN FEBRUARY 23, 1972 ABORTIVE COUP. AIKPE AND ASSOGBA REFUSED, AND MATTER LEFT IN ABEYANCE PENDING KEREKOU'S RETURN FROM CONAKRY.

2. BEGINNING SATURDAY, MAY 19 INFORMATION MINISTER KOFFI BEGAN SERIALIZED READING OF COURT'S JUDGMENT OVER GOVERNMENT RADIO. THUS FAR ALLEY, HACHEME AND CHABI ("THE BRAINS AND FINANCIER OF THE OPERATION") HAVE BEEN NAMED THE LEADERS OF PLOT TO KILL AIKPE AND ASSOGBA AND TO ARREST KEREKOU. SENTENCES SCHEDULED TO BE ANNOUNCED OVER RADIO MAY 21.

3. DURING SAME PERIOD TRACTS SIGNED BY UNKNOWN ANTI-IMPERIALIST FRONT HAVE APPEARED REPORTING KEREKOU REALLY UNDER CONTROL OF HOUPOUET-BOIGNEY, EYADEMA, KOUANDETE, GERMAN EMBASSY, FRENCH EMBASSY AND NUMBER DAHOMEAN CIVILIANS UNSYMPATHETIC TO REVOLUTION. ACCORDING SDECE, THESE TRACTS PRODUCED IN AIKPE'S MINISTRY AS FURTHER EFFORT WEAKEN KEREKOU. WE ALSO HAVE INFORMATION THAT AHOMADEGBE'S PEOPLE MAY BE HARD AT WORK HERE. ON MAY 19 PRESIDENCY ISSUED FORMAL COMMUNIQUE DENOUNCING TRACTS AND WARNING EXTERMINATION OF PERPETRATORS.

4. COMMENT: HEART OF AIKPE-ASSOGBA VERSUS KEREKOU STRUGGLE IS BASICALLY FUTURE OF KOUANDETE. ITS RESOLUTION MAY TAKE TIME; BUT IF KEREKOU STANDS FIRM, EFFORTS TO NEUTRALIZE THE NORTHERNERS' MOST PROMINENT CITIZEN WILL BE DIFFICULT.
ANDERSON

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NMAFVVZCZ

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TAGS: PINS, DM, GC
To: ABIDJAN
AF
CONAKRY
LAGOS
LOME
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OUAGADOUGOU

PARIS
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